

CARLETON UNIVERSITY

Early Summer 2015

Department of English

May 4—June 16, 2015

ENGL 3702 A: AMERICAN CULTURE:

Banned Books: Tension & Transgression 1950-2000

Tuesdays & Thursdays / 2:35 pm - 5:25 pm

Location: St. Patrick's Building 303

(Please confirm on Carleton Central)

Instructor: Miles Tittle

Email: miles_tittle@carleton.ca

Office: Dunton Tower DT 1929

Phone: NA

Office Hours: By appointment

Course description:

This course explores America's post-WWII struggles to define itself as a country and modern culture, focusing on literary works that were challenged, censored, or banned between the early 1950s and 1990s. Each generation's writers exploited areas of anxiety as the battles for civil, political, and personal rights were fought, and popular culture held the front lines, constantly testing the resistance to change. Today, the U.S. is polarized to such an extent that its society is perhaps best viewed through the tensions and ideological controversies that divide it, and the creative works that define that rift. ****Precludes additional credit for ENGL 3703 (no longer offered).**

Required textbooks:

We will be using the following novels in our class, and they are available at the Carleton University Bookstore. If you own other editions or find used copies you'll have to juggle page numbers, but it shouldn't be a great inconvenience otherwise.

1. Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* (1955).
2. Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969).
3. Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1971).
4. Judy Blume, *Forever...* (1975).
5. Bret Easton Ellis, *American Psycho* (1991).

Secondary Material: Many other works will be mentioned or discussed in class. Some will be made available on-line or through hand-outs, and others will be shown in class. Lectures will discuss historical contexts and cultural topics such as Rock and Roll, the Beat poets, *Playboy*, the Comics Code, the McCarthy hearings, Martin Luther King, Malcom X, race riots, Vietnam, Underground Comix, Richard Pryor, Doonesbury, *Rolling Stone*, school libraries, *National Lampoon*, The Firesign Theatre, Woodstock, drugs, Satanic cults, Heavy Metal, Dungeons & Dragons, Tipper Gore, video games, Wall Street and the AIDS crisis.

Types of assignments, weighting and due dates:

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|----|----------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------|
| 1. | Assignment 1: Short Analysis | 15% | May 19 |
| 2. | Assignment 2: In-Class Midterm <i>1 hour</i> | 15% | May 26 |
| 3. | Assignment 3: Major Essay | 30% | June 11 |
| 4. | Final Exam: <i>3 hours</i> | 30% | TBA |
| 5. | Attendance & Participation | 10% | <i>throughout</i> |

**** Please note:** *Students must hand in all three assignments in order to be eligible to write the final exam, and students must write the final exam in order to pass the course. There can be no exceptions to these requirements.*

Assignment due dates:

Assignments done out of class must be handed in to the instructor at the beginning of class on the scheduled due date. Marks will be deducted at a rate of **5% per day**, including weekends and holidays, for any late assignment submitted without a medical certificate or equivalent official excuse. After one week, the instructor is under no obligation to accept late assignments. All assignments must be submitted before the final exam date, or the student will not be allowed to write the final exam, or pass the course.

Late assignments should be delivered directly to the instructor, or put in the The English Department office dropbox (Dunton Tower 18th floor). **The instructor does not accept late assignments under his office door.** Late submissions by email may be accepted in unusual circumstances at the instructor's discretion, but a hard copy must also be submitted as soon as possible. Carleton requires that students use their Carleton email address for university correspondence.

Reading

Reading some of the texts, especially longer works like *Lolita* or *American Psycho* before classes begin is a very good strategy. If you have time, buy your books early, settle in and read them at a comfortable pace in the evenings, the way they were meant to be experienced.

Please note: *This course covers several controversial issues, and some sensibilities may be offended. Expect depictions of sexuality, racism, violence, and other potentially disturbing material. Please consider whether you will be comfortable with this, and contact me if you have any questions or concerns.*

Attendance policy:

Regular class attendance is essential. Active, thoughtful participation in lectures and workshops helps ensure success in the course. Please note that in-class tasks cannot be made up outside of class except in case of an absence covered by a medical certificate or equivalent official excuse. Some of the questions on tests could come from topics explained in lectures but not found in the texts.

Academic fraud (plagiarism):

Students are strongly urged to familiarize themselves with the rules concerning academic fraud.

The Carleton Academic Integrity Policy is available on campus and also on the Web at:

http://www1.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/ccms/wp-content/ccms-files/academic_integrity_policy.pdf

It is always the student's responsibility to practice academic diligence and to properly cite all sources. The consequences of academic fraud are extremely serious, and could jeopardize your academic future.

SCHEDULE

(Date) Topics Readings to be done *before* each class

1950s- Sex & the Neighbours

1. May 5 Course introduction & syllabus
WW II, McCarthyism, Elvis, Prosperity and Patriotism.

1950s- Sex & the Neighbours

2. May 7 Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997). *Howl* (1955).
Beat Generation, Jack Kerouac, William S. Burroughs, John Clellon Holmes.
Horror & Crime Comics, The Comics Code, *Mad Magazine* (1952).

1950s- Sex & the Neighbours

3. May 12 Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977). *Lolita* (1955) Part 1 (pg. 1- 142).
Playboy Magazine (1953), Sexuality, Contract Law, Betty Page.

1950s- Sex & the Neighbours

4. May 14 Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977). *Lolita* (1955) Part 2.
Innocence & Minors: Shirley Temple, Brooke Shields, Jock Sturges, Sally Mann
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1960s- Race & Counter-culture

5. May 19 Maya Angelou (1928-). *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969) Ch. 1-20 (pg. 1-146) Martin Luther King (1968), *X-Men* (1968), Vietnam (1955-75), J.F. K. (1963). ***Assignment 1: Short Analysis Due (15%)***

1960s- Race & Counter-culture

6. May 21 Maya Angelou (1928-). *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969) Ch. 21-end Malcom X (1965), Richard Pryor, Black Panther Party (1966-82).

1960s- Race & Counter-culture

7. May 26 ***MIDTERM (60 min- 15%)***
Underground Comix, Robert Crumb, Gilbert Shelton, Bill Griffith, Art Spiegelman. *The Furry Freak Brothers* (1968), Trina Robbins.

1970s- Drugs & Rock & Roll

8. May 28 Hunter S. Thompson (1937-2005). *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1971) Part 1 (pg. 1-96). *Doonesbury* (1970-), *Rolling Stone* (1967-), Gonzo journalism.

1970s- Drugs & Rock & Roll

9. June 2 Hunter S. Thompson (1937-2005). *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1971) Part 2 (pg. 97-end). *National Lampoon* (1970-), *Firesign Theatre* (1968-).

1970s- Drugs & Rock & Roll

10. June 4 Judy Blume (1938-). *Forever...* (1975).
Teen Love & Pregnancy, School Censorship. Margaret Simon & Tony Miglione.

1980s- Fear & Money

11. June 9 Tipper Gore (1948-) *Raising PG Kids in an X-Rated Society* (1987).
Heavy Metal, video games, Dungeons & Dragons, Televangelists.

1980s- Fear & Money

12. June 11 Bret Easton Ellis (1964-) *American Psycho* (1991). (pg. 1- 199).
AIDS, alienation, fashion, Wall Street.

1980s- Fear & Money

13. June 16 Bret Easton Ellis (1964-) *American Psycho* (1991). (pg. 200-end).
Iran/Contra, serial killers, class warfare.
Final Essay due (30%)

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|-------------|---|------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Exam Period | • | Final exam | (30%) |
| | | Date to be announced (June 19-25, 2015) | |

Always remember to bring your books with you to class.

Classes will usually be split, with a 15-min break around 4:00 pm separating the lecture and discussion group components. During discussion we will introduce other secondary and critical works to give you a greater range of possible topics for your assignments. Any changes to the schedule will be announced ahead of time. The second half may sometimes be used for screening of a movie or television adaptation of relevant work.

Marking: Carleton University uses the following 12-point grading scale (*Percentage Grade/Letter Grade/Number Grade*): 0-49% **F** (0), 50-52% **D-** (1), 53-56% **D** (2), 57-59% **D+** (3), 60-62% **C-** (4), 63-66% **C** (5), 67-69% **C+** (6), 70-72% **B-** (7), 73-76% **B** (8), 77-79% **B+** (9), 80-84% **A-** (10), 85-89% **A** (11), 90-100% **A+** (12). Note that 50% is the pass mark, so an F is a failing grade. Essays are generally marked for Content (30%), Organization (30%), Language (30%), and Handling (10%).

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide.

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation.

If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable).

After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Safety: Carleton Campus Safety is at 203 Robertson Hall. Campus Safe-Walk/Escort Service: 613 520-2600 ext. 4066. You can also arrange for a team to meet you outside your class every week.
<http://carleton.ca/university-safety/>

Plagiarism: The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.